

# Man sees hope in deportation fight

By Joe E. Carmean Jr.  
Staff writer

LEWES — Sussex County paramedic Mark Murphy may not have to leave the country after all.

The Irish immigrant, with the assistance of friends, coworkers and a U.S. senator, thinks he's found a way to stay.

Arriving in the U.S. nearly four years ago at the age of 36, Mr. Murphy was seeking an education that was unavailable in Ireland.

On a student visa, he attended classes at the paramedic school at the Center for Emergency Medicine in Pittsburgh to become a certified paramedic.

Upon completing his studies, Duquesne University in Pittsburgh sponsored Mr. Murphy for a student-exchange visa so he could participate in a leadership and development program with the Sussex County Emergency Medical Service.

The exchange visa was only for 18 months, expiring in August.

In June, Mr. Murphy applied for a visa extension with the Immigration and Naturalization Service to gain more time to secure a green card so he could stay.

But he was denied because his sponsor had dropped him.

He received a letter from the INS denying his request on Sept. 21 and had less than a month to leave the country by Oct. 10.

His employer, Glenn Luedtke, director of Sussex County EMS, and fellow para-

medics began getting the word out to state officials in an effort to prevent Mr. Murphy's return to Ireland.

The office of Sen. Thomas R. Carper, D-Del., answered the call and immediately began working on the case, according to the senator's press secretary Brian Selander.

The senator's Sussex County staff called Mr. Murphy in for an emergency meeting following the news.

"What happened was (INS supervisory special agent William) Horn agreed that I should not be penalized for the INS's backlog and granted me an extension to Oct. 19," said Mr. Murphy.

"He said I had done everything legally."

Mr. Murphy's student-exchange visa was extended another week, giving him more time to change his immigration status.

"Once I put in for a change, Mr. Horn said I have up to 120 days while it is being processed," he said.

Mr. Murphy said he is applying to change his status to a full-time student and, during that time, Sussex EMS will petition INS for him to become a permanent resident.

"Sussex EMS has said they are prepared to do that," he said.

The only catch is that Mr. Murphy will have to stop being a paramedic. He can't work while under a full-time student status.

In fact, Mr. Murphy said he gave his two weeks' notice and resigned as a paramedic upon receiving his denial letter from INS on Sept. 25.

In order to make it until December financially, Mr. Murphy will have to rely on the vacation and sick time he accrued while working for Sussex EMS. He also will not

be eligible for financial aid to pay for his classes at Delaware Technical & Community College because of international restrictions.

"I'm fairly confident I can make it until December and pay my bills," he said. "But if the petition hasn't gone through by then, I will surely have to leave because I'll be broke."

Mr. Murphy said he is still very grateful to everyone, especially Sen. Carper's office, for helping him find more time.

"This is a good result," he said. "This is just what I have to go through if I want to stay here."

"I'm going to try very hard to make the best use of my time and get as much schooling as I can," said Mr. Murphy. "The hardest part is I can't be a medic."

"But I'm going to volunteer when and where I can."

Mr. Selander said Sen. Carper "was committed to making sure Mr. Murphy had a chance to plead his case."

"As an EMS technician in Sussex County, Mr. Murphy has served his community well and the senator is pleased he'll have more time."

The senator's Georgetown offices were bombarded with support for Mr. Murphy, said Mr. Selander.

"This is not the end of the road for Mr. Murphy," he added. "Whatever hurdles may lie ahead, the senator is prepared to face them as they come."

Added Mr. Murphy, "This has been kind of a humbling experience."

"I never knew I had so many friends. Many thanks to everyone."

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**Mark Murphy**